



# Is Stealing More Than Just Taking What Isn't Yours?

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When we think of stealing, we often picture a person taking someone else's money, property, or valuables. However, in the Bible, the commandment "*You shall not steal*" ([Exodus 20:15](#)) covers much more than these obvious actions. Stealing, in its many forms, involves any act of taking or withholding what rightfully belongs to another. In today's rapidly evolving society, this concept of theft has expanded to include behaviors and actions that might not have been previously considered as stealing but are nonetheless violations of God's law and principles of honesty, integrity, and respect for others.

## Intellectual Property Theft and Digital Piracy

One significant form of theft today is intellectual property theft, which includes the illegal downloading of music, movies, software, and other digital content. With the advancement of technology, it has become easier than ever to access copyrighted materials without proper authorization. This is often justified as being harmless or a victimless crime. However, the Bible teaches us to respect others' labor and creativity, echoing the Golden Rule: "*Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them*" ([Matthew 7:12](#)). When we engage in digital piracy, we are effectively stealing from the creators and distributors who rely on the sale of their products for their livelihood.

## Time Theft in the Workplace

Another modern form of theft that is increasingly common is time theft in the workplace. This occurs when employees waste time on personal activities, such as browsing social media, online shopping, or engaging in non-work-related conversations during work hours. The Bible reminds us in [Colossians 3:23](#), "*Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people.*" Misusing time at work not only cheats employers of the productivity they are paying for, but it also reflects poorly on one's work ethic and integrity as a Christian. Giving our best effort in all we do is a testimony to our faith and commitment to God's principles.

## Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

In academic settings, plagiarism and cheating have become prevalent issues. With the ease of access to information online, it has become common for students to copy others' work or use unauthorized resources to complete assignments or exams. The Bible calls for honesty and integrity, stating, "*Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another*" ([Leviticus 19:11](#)). Plagiarism and academic dishonesty are forms of theft because they involve taking credit for work that is not one's own. This not only undermines the integrity of the educational process but also diminishes the value of one's personal development and character.

## Forging Qualifications and Lying on Resumes

Another subtle but significant form of theft is the act of forging qualifications or lying on resumes and in job interviews. When someone claims credentials, skills, or experience they do not possess, they are effectively stealing opportunities from those who are genuinely qualified. Proverbs 11:3 reminds us, "*The integrity of the upright guides them, but the perversity of the treacherous destroys them*" ([Proverbs 11:3](#)). Falsifying information to secure a job or promotion not only deceives employers but also undermines trust and creates a foundation built on lies. Such actions can have far-reaching consequences, not only for the individual but also for the organization and its stakeholders. As Christians, we are called to be truthful and honest in all our dealings, including representing ourselves accurately in professional settings.

## Identity Theft and Online Fraud

Identity theft is a growing concern in today's digital world. It involves stealing someone's personal information, such as social security numbers, bank account details, or other sensitive data, for fraudulent purposes. This form of theft can cause severe financial and emotional damage to the victim. Proverbs 22:1 states, "*A good name is to be chosen over great wealth; favor is better than silver and gold*" ([Proverbs 22:1](#)). Identity theft not only robs individuals of their finances but also of their reputation and peace of mind. As Christians, we are called to respect others' privacy and protect their identities, not exploit them for personal gain.

## Exploiting Others' Generosity

Exploiting the generosity of others is another form of theft that is often overlooked. This can happen when individuals repeatedly take advantage of another's kindness or resources without any intention of reciprocation or gratitude. The Bible teaches, "*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another*" ([Romans 13:8](#)). When we exploit others' generosity, we are essentially robbing them of their time, resources, and goodwill. This is a subtle but real form of stealing, as it abuses the trust and kindness extended by others.

## Withholding Wages and Fair Compensation

In the realm of business and employment, withholding wages or underpaying employees is a form of theft that continues to plague many industries. James 5:4 warns, "*Look! The wages that you have withheld from the workers who mowed your fields cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts*" ([James 5:4](#)). Employers who fail to pay fair wages or who exploit workers are effectively stealing from them, depriving them of what they are rightfully owed. This form of theft is particularly grievous as it affects the livelihoods and well-being of individuals and their families.

## Misuse of Company Resources

Misusing company resources for personal gain is another form of theft that is often rationalized in the workplace. This could include using company supplies, equipment, or even funds for personal projects or benefits. The Bible encourages us to be faithful stewards of what we are entrusted with: "*So if you have not been faithful with worldly wealth, who will trust you with what is genuine?*" ([Luke 16:11](#)). Misusing resources is not only unethical but also a breach of trust between employer and employee, and it reflects poorly on one's character and faith.

## Tax Evasion and Financial Dishonesty

Cheating on taxes or engaging in financial deceit is a more sophisticated but no less sinful form of stealing. Many justify tax evasion by arguing that the government misuses funds or that their taxes are too high. However, the Bible commands us to "*give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's*" ([Matthew 22:21](#)). Evading taxes is not just illegal; it is a form of stealing from society, as it deprives the community of the resources needed for public services and infrastructure. Christians are called to live with integrity, and part of that includes being honest in our financial dealings.

## Deceptive Business Practices

Deceptive business practices, such as inflating prices unfairly, misrepresenting products, or engaging in false advertising, are all forms of stealing that have become increasingly common. Proverbs 11:1 reminds us, "*Dishonest scales are detestable to the Lord, but an accurate weight is his delight*" ([Proverbs 11:1](#)). Engaging in dishonest business practices to gain a financial edge is stealing because it takes advantage of customers and misleads them for profit. As Christians, we are called to honesty and fairness in all our dealings, ensuring that our actions reflect God's righteousness.

## Neglecting to Give God His Due

Failing to give God what is due to Him is another, perhaps less obvious, form of stealing. Malachi 3:8 asks, "*Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing me! How do we rob you? you ask. By not making the payments of the tenth and the contributions*" ([Malachi 3:8](#)). Not giving tithes and offerings is considered robbing God, as it reflects a lack of gratitude and a failure to acknowledge His provision. The act of withholding from God demonstrates a failure in stewardship and a lack of trust in His faithfulness.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, stealing extends far beyond the simple act of taking something physical that does not belong to us. It includes a wide range of behaviors that, while perhaps less visible or direct, nonetheless violate the spirit of God's commandment and the call to live righteously and justly. Sadly, many people, including professing Christians, often engage in these subtle forms of theft without feeling remorse or recognizing the gravity of their actions. They may justify digital piracy, waste time at work, or engage in academic dishonesty, all while maintaining a facade of righteousness.

However, as believers, we are called to a higher standard. We must distance ourselves from all forms of evil, including these subtle thefts. As [1 Thessalonians 5:22](#) instructs, "*Stay away from every kind of evil.*" We are urged to wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb, symbolizing our need for continual purification and righteousness. [Revelation 7:14](#) reminds us, "*They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*"

Let us remember that Christ is coming soon to rapture His Church. As [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#) declares, "*For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*" Therefore, let us be vigilant in all our dealings, ensuring that our actions reflect the heart and character of Christ, so that we may be found blameless at His coming.

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